London

Metropolitan Grand Lodge of London

VISIT PROTOCOLS - CRAFT

INTRODUCTION

While it is impossible to cover every eventuality with regard to visits made to lodges by Metropolitan Rulers, this guide has been produced to advise lodge Secretaries, Directors of Ceremonies, Worshipful Masters and other officers of the arrangements and protocols with respect to the majority of these types of occasions.

It is hoped that it will also prove useful to Metropolitan Grand Officers and Visiting Officers as and when they are asked to undertake and support these events.

This guide is divided into five categories of events:

- Lodge occasions led/organised by Grand Lodge
- Lodge occasions led/organised by Metropolitan Grand Lodge
- Other celebratory Lodge Event
- Official London lodge visit by a MetGL Ruler
- Official London lodge visit by a Visiting Officer

If you have any questions, please call the Met office and someone will be only too pleased to talk through the situation with you and offer advice.

Matthew Christmas
Metropolitan Grand Secretary/Metropolitan Grand Scribe E

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LODGE OCCASIONS LED/ORGANISED BY GRAND LODGE

Typical Events
Bicentenaries and tercentenaries.

Guest of Honour (GOH) and Escort Team
Typically, the Guest of Honour will be a senior representative from Grand Lodge supported by the MetGM or a DepMetGM.

UGLE will confirm the Guest of Honour and escort team. MetGL will provide a MetGDC and escort team to cover the separate entry into the lodge of the MetGL team which would include other 'chains' and active MetGOs.

Administrative Arrangements
UGLE will notify MetGL two years in advance of the occasion. MetGL will then formally write to the lodge seeking confirmation of how the lodge wish to celebrate the event.

The lodge secretary (or other agreed representative) should then advise the MetGL office of their preferences regarding the date and style of the celebration on office@metgl.com. Acknowledgment will be sent by return. Ideally, a minimum of six months' notice is to be given by the lodge to MetGL.

The MetGL office will liaise with UGLE to arrange the Guest of Honour, DC and supporting team. THE LODGE MUST NOT DIRECTLY CONTACT UGLE.

Dress Code
The UGLE and MetGL teams will typically be in morning dress and tailcoats for the meeting, with a short jacket for the festive board. Dress regalia will be worn and chains for Rulers and UGLE officers where applicable.

The summons should advise 'dress regalia', where applicable, for lodge members and visitors.

Payment for Dining
It would be normal for the lodge to cover the dining costs of the UGLE and MetGL teams.

Wording for Lodge Summons
This will be provided by the MetGL office in conjunction with UGLE.

Visit Protocols
The precise protocols will be determined by UGLE for both the lodge meeting and the festive board including details of the seating plans. These will be communicated to the lodge via the MetGL office.

LODGE OCCASIONS LED/ORGANISED BY METROPOLITAN GRAND LODGE

Typical Events
Consecrations, amalgamations, centenaries and banner dedications.

Guest of Honour (GOH) and Escort Team
Consecrations: The consecration team is typically led by the MetGM or a DepMetGM with a supporting escort team.

All other occasions: The Guest of Honour will normally be the MetGM, a DepMetGM or an AMetGM. If none of these is available, a MetGInsp will be appointed.

The escort team will typically be the MetGDC or a MetDepGDC supported by two MetGStwds. MetGL will arrange the Guest of Honour and escort team.

Administrative Arrangements
Consecrations: The Founders should contact the MetGSec at the earliest opportunity to discuss the process to be followed and likely timescale.

Centenaries: MetGL will formally write to the lodge Secretary two years in advance. MetGL will then request UGLE to start the process to determine continuity and prepare the Centenary Warrant. The lodge Secretary should advise the MetGL office at centenaries@metgl.com regarding how they would like to celebrate the occasion. An acknowledgement will be sent by return. (Also see MGL-G-7 (Centenaries))

Banner Dedications: Requests for banner dedications are to be made by the lodge at least 12 months in advance to banners@metgl.com. An acknowledgement will be sent by return.

The proposed banner design should be sent to the MetGSec at least six months in advance. MetGL will then submit the design to UGLE for approval. For complex designs, especially those involving heraldic emblems, it would be prudent to allow more than six months. Banners should not be manufactured until after the design has been approved by UGLE. (Also see MGL-G-4 (Banner Dedications))

Amalgamations: The lodge Secretary (or other agreed representative) should advise the MetGL office of the proposed amalgamation as early as possible to office@metgl.com. An acknowledgement will be sent by return setting out the detailed process to be followed, responsibilities and timescales.

The MetGL office will also advise on the ceremonial process to be followed for each of the various occasions including specific responsibilities and timelines. (Also see MGL-G-34 (Amalgamations))

Dress Code
The MetGL team will typically be in morning dress and tailcoats for the meeting, with a short jacket for the festive board. Dress regalia will be worn and chains for Rulers.

The summons should advise ‘dress regalia’, where applicable, for lodge members and visitors.

Payment for Dining
It would be normal for the lodge to cover the dining costs of the MetGL team. MetGStwds are often prepared to be self-funding, but it would be hoped that the lodge offers to host them at centenaries and amalgamations, as they pay for many other Metropolitan events that they attend.

Wording for Lodge Summons
This will be provided by MetGL. In normal circumstances, the following item should be included on the agenda after normal lodge business:

"To receive and welcome R.W. Bro. Warren Duke, Metropolitan Grand Master and other distinguished guests"

Visit Protocols
In general, the only lodge business on these occasions should be to celebrate the particular event. The MetGDC has created a set of detailed visit protocols to be followed on all these occasions. The assigned Met DC will provide appropriate information.

In summary, the typical format for the visit will be:

- Rehearsal, usually one hour before the meeting starts
- Lodge opening inc. minutes and dispensation if required
- Entry of the GOH and MetGL team under direction of the Met DC
- The main item(s) of business for the meeting
- Lodge closing
- National Anthem and recession under direction of the Met DC

At the Festive Board:

- The WM will enter the Festive Board accompanying the GOH led by the Met DC
- Met Chaplain or lodge Chaplain give Grace
- Wine taking under the direction of the Met DC. Typically:
    - WM with GOH
    - WM and GOH with all
- Met Chaplain or lodge Chaplain give Grace after the meal, or it is sung
- Formal toasts after the meal

For consecrations, centenaries and amalgamations, the GOH having replied to the MetGL officers' toast, immediately proposes a toast to the lodge which is responded to by the WM. This toast replaces the usual toast to the WM.

OTHER CELEBRATORY LODGE EVENTS

Typical Events
Presentation of a Long Service Certificate to an individual (i.e. 50, 60 or 70 years service/membership), prominent lodge anniversaries (i.e. 25, 50, 75, 125, 150, 175, 250 or 275 years), and/or to make a major charity donation.

Guest of Honour (GOH) and Escort Team
Typically, the Guest of Honour will be a MetGInsp or, on occasions, an AMetGM or a DepMetGM.

An active Metropolitan Grand Officer who has been approved for Escorting Officer duties will be the Met DC. He may be supported by two MetGStwds if the GOH and/or lodge so requests.

Administrative Arrangements
The lodge Secretary (or agreed representative) should contact the MetGInsp who is responsible for the lodge by email. A copy of the email should also be sent to office@metgl.com for internal records. The MetGInsp will acknowledge the email by return and confirm his attendance. If he is unavailable to attend, then he will organise another Guest of Honour. At least three months' notice should be given by the lodge.

The GOH will arrange an escorting Met DC and MetGStwds, if applicable. Once allocated, the Met DC will contact the lodge secretary to make further arrangements.

Dress Code
The MetGL team will typically be in morning dress and short jacket. Undress regalia will be worn and chains for Rulers.

The summons should advise 'undress regalia', where applicable, for lodge members and visitors.

Payment for Dining
It would be normal for the lodge to cover the dining costs of the GOH and the Escorting Officer. Any other members of the MetGL team will pay for their own meals.

Wording for Lodge Summons
This will be provided by MetGL. In normal circumstances, the following item should be included on the agenda after normal lodge business:

"To receive and welcome W. Bro. [First Name] [Surname], [Grand Rank], Metropolitan Grand Inspector and other distinguished guests"

Visit Protocols
The MetGDC has created a set of detailed visit protocols to be followed on all these occasions. The assigned Met DC will provide appropriate information.

In summary, the typical format for the visit will be:

- Rehearsal, usually one hour before the meeting starts
- Lodge opening inc. minutes and dispensation if required
- Entry of the GOH and MetGL team under direction of the Met DC
- The main item(s) of business for the meeting
- The presentation of the certificate(s) by the GOH
- Lodge closing
- National Anthem and recession under direction of the Met DC

At the Festive Board:

- The WM will enter the Festive Board accompanying the GOH led by the Met DC
- The lodge Chaplain gives Grace
- Wine taking under the direction of the Met DC. Typically:
- WM with GOH
- WM and GOH with all
- The lodge Chaplain gives Grace after the meal, or it is sung
- Formal toasts after the meal

OFFICIAL LONDON LODGE VISIT BY A METGL RULER

Typical Events
Visits made by a Metropolitan Ruler (most commonly a MetGInsp) in order to get to know a lodge and its members.

Guest of Honour (GOH) and Escort Team
Any DepMetGM, AMetGM or MetGInsp.

An active Metropolitan Grand Officer who has been approved for Escorting Officer duties will be the Met DC. He may be supported by two MetGStwds if the GOH and/or lodge so requests.

Administrative Arrangements
These visits will generally be initiated by the GOH who will liaise directly with the lodge Secretary.

Dress Code
The MetGL team will typically be in morning dress and short jacket. Undress regalia will be worn and chains for Rulers.

The summons should advise 'undress regalia', where applicable, for lodge members and visitors.

Payment for Dining
It would be normal for the lodge to cover the dining costs of the GOH and the Escorting Officer. Any other members of the MetGL team will pay for their own meals.

Wording for Lodge Summons
In normal circumstances, the following item should be included on the agenda after the minutes of the previous meeting:

"To receive and welcome W. Bro. [First Name] [Surname], [Grand Rank], Metropolitan Grand Inspector [and other distinguished guests]"

Visit Protocols
The MetGDC has created a set of detailed visit protocols to be followed on all these occasions. The assigned Met EO will provide appropriate information.

In summary, the typical format for the visit will be:

- Rehearsal, usually one hour before the meeting starts
- Lodge opening inc. minutes and dispensation if required
- Entry of the GOH and MetGL team under direction of the Met DC
- The main item(s) of business for the meeting
- Lodge closing
- National Anthem and recession under direction of the Met DC

At the Festive Board:

- The WM will enter the Festive Board accompanying the GOH led by the Met DC
- The lodge Chaplain gives Grace
- Wine taking under the direction of the Met DC. Typically:
    - WM with GOH
    - WM and GOH with all
- The lodge Chaplain gives Grace after the meal, or it is sung
- Formal toasts after the meal

OFFICIAL LONDON LODGE VISIT BY A VISITING OFFICER

Typical Events
Visits made by a Visiting Officer in order to represent MetGL to a lodge, and correspondingly represent the lodge back to MetGL.

Guest of Honour (GOH) and Escort Team
VOs can visit officially but would not be designated as a GOH as they have no authority to preside. VOs attend without any escort.

Administrative Arrangements
These visits will generally be initiated by the VO who will liaise directly with the lodge Secretary. VOs will generally try to visit lodges allocated to them twice per year; once officially and once unofficially.

On an official visit, the VO attends as the representative of the MetGM and therefore have precedence over Grand Officers, but this needs to be handled with sensitivity. If a Grand Officer insists on exercising his authority, as he sees it, then it would be better to defer to him and maintain harmony in the lodge but the incident should be noted in the visit report. Ideally the protocols should be discussed with the lodge prior to the visit to avoid unnecessary embarrassment.

An official visit should not be made when a Ruler is present (e.g. MetGM, DepMetGM, AMetGM or MetGInsp) unless that Ruler is a member of the lodge. Again, it would be prudent to discuss the formalities with the Ruler prior to the visit.

On an unofficial visit, the VO attends simply as a visitor/guest in the normal fashion and is treated according to his rank.

Dress Code
The VO will typically be in morning dress and short jacket or a lounge suit, as is the Lodge custom. Undress regalia will be worn.

Payment for Dining
It would be normal for the lodge to cover the dining costs of the VO on his annual official visit. On an unofficial visit, the VO is self-funding.

Wording for Lodge Summons
For an official visit, the following item should be included on the agenda after the minutes of the previous meeting:

“To welcome W. Bro. [First Name] [Surname], [Rank], the lodge’s Visiting Officer”

When taken, the WM can welcome the VO (who will be sat on his immediate right) but must not offer the gavel. Likewise, the VO would only be saluted according to his rank and in a group with all others receiving the same salutation e.g. holders of SLGR and LGR.

For an unofficial visit, there is no specific welcome and the VO is not seated in the temple and at the festive board in any particular place.

Visit Protocols

Other than already outlined above, protocols for the official visit of a VO are minimal. The lodge might invite the VO to speak on the Second Rising and the VO would normally respond to the toast to Metropolitan ranks at the festive board.